THOUGHTS OF A RECLUSE

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THOUGHTS OF A RECLUSE

BY

AUSTIN O'MALLEY, M.D., Ph.D., LL.D.

« *Nec aranearum sane texus ideo melior quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.*»

JUSTUS LIPSIUS, *Monit. Polit.*

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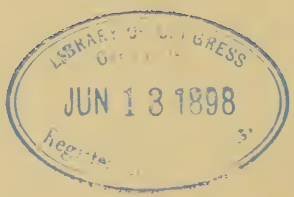

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SOCIAL LIFE

SOCIAL LIFE

ONE advantage a democracy has over a monarchy is that there is more wisdom in a hundred fools than in one.

* * *

A GENTLEMAN very seldom meets rude persons.

* * *

THE people that enjoy the greatest political liberty often suffer from the most abject spiritual slavery.

* * *

SOME men are like a church-organ — you can play on them for a lifetime and always find new tunes; others are like a music-box — they have four or five shallow jingles.

* * *

WHEN a child has grown tired of a rubber balloon he thrusts a pin into it to hear the explosion. Death will do the same thing with your life, and the explosion will be the obituary notice in your local newspaper. The bigger the balloon the louder the explosion, but it's all a matter of gas.

STERNE well said: "So-and-so is my friend, but Truth is my sister."

* * *

IN THE process of making a gentleman, the last flaw that is ground out of the soul is a tendency toward familiarity with those he loves.

* * *

VANITY is as universal as fingers. When Solomon wrote his dissertation on vanity he would have been deeply grieved if a critic had censured the style of the discourse.

* * *

IF YOU would know a young man's character find out where he builds his air-castles.

* * *

WHY do we use the simile, "blind as a bat," which is not blind, instead of "blind as vanity," which is altogether eyeless?

* * *

WHEN an old man points out to youth that all flowers are weeds, this old man thinks he is citing the authority of experience, but in every case he is really expressing his own feelings in the present. Experience after all is not the best teacher. We grow physically unfit for certain sorts of foolishness, and then we prate about experience and wisdom. Experience is useful only in cases where passion does not enter.

We are very like a dog running in a treadmill. The poor beast strives upward fawning and whining but he never advances, and if he rests he is hurled backward and bruised. While off the mill he snaps at flies till Death snaps at him, and makes of him food to fatten weeds.

* * *

They often say woman cannot keep a secret, but every woman in the world, like every man, has a hundred secrets in her own soul which she hides from even herself. The more respectable she is the more certain it is the secrets exist.

* * *

Many noble thoughts that are commonly classified as effects of the Sermon on the Mount were known to rational men before the time of our Lord. Plato, in the 'Crito,' makes Socrates say: "We must never retaliate by doing evil for evil; and we must never injure any man, though we may suffer ever so great injury from him." No one, however, heeded these thoughts until our Lord clothed them with light.

* * *

A man's life is like a well, not like a snake — it should be measured by its depth, not by its length.

* * *

There is no incognito so skilfully kept as that of the just woman.

Any black key on a piano may be a sharp or a flat. Chanon said, "the first sigh of love is the last of wisdom" — *amantes, amentes.* The same west wind that in May flows musically through the oak's new buds, in December snarls across the bare boughs and hisses on the sere leaves; and how different is the same voice of the world in our glorious summer and in the winter of our discontent.

* * *

It is an ill wind that blows no good — on the sigh of the orphan is wafted skill to the young surgeon, said a mediæval proverb.

* * *

A hundred suns go to redden one poor rose, God's blood to save a slime-dweller's soul; a life's pain and toil are paid for a short flash of honor as valuable as an angry woman's reason, and whole nations have been annihilated because some king's dyspepsia bothered the rascal. We usually pay large prices for cheap commodities despite the chatter of the political economists.

* * *

We swell out our breasts and say we are in manly pursuit of glory, when God knows we are puppies chasing our own tails, till Death grows tired of the farce and knaps us o' the coxcombs with his flail, crying, "down, wantons, down!" and the show is ended.

A COMMON sop to one's conscience is to grow eloquent over the short-comings of the clergy, but it is doubtful if God will judge us by what the clergy do.

* * *

LIFE differs from the drama and romance in this that the *dénouement* of life is always death, never a marriage.

* * *

LIFE is a process of weaning in which the nurse is seldom successful.

* * *

THE difference between a human being ten years of age and one fifty years of age lies altogether in the matter of toys.

* * *

IF YOU would avoid all fools go into a dense forest and there refrain from gazing into still pools.

* * *

A MAN morally small resembles a statue in this respect: the higher he is elevated the more he dwindles. There are men that do well enough on the ground; but if they are set on a lofty pedestal, we cannot for the life of us determine whether they are men or monkeys.

* * *

WE SHOULD thank God that He did not give us the power of hearing through walls; otherwise there would be no such thing as friendship.

Vox populi, vox Dei, is perhaps the falsest and the most blasphemous aphorism used by the newspapers.

* * *

THE weaker a man in authority, layman, or cleric, the stronger his insistence that all his privileges be acknowledged. A strong man needs no crutches.

* * *

CICERO said: "*Libertas est potestas faciendi id quod jure liceat*"; man usually thinks liberty is the power of doing what he likes to do. That is license.

* * *

"WE ARE grains of incense," said Marcus Aurelius, and we are burned in the thurible that Death the priest swings before the altar of God. Does one grain say to another: "I am better than thou"?

* * *

DESPISE no man, since every one has his place in God's design. A sheet of brown paper may be better as a wrapper for a loaf of bread than a page from Homer, and we must sometimes carry home bread.

* * *

THE American word "bluff" is so expressive that it is not only a complete library of biography, but also a history of collegiate education in the United States.

THE habits of a young man are like his coat, removable; the habits of an old man are like the drapery of a statue.

* * *

IF WISE men were hairs how bald a pate this old world would now have.

* * *

LIBERTY has as many chains as slavery, but the golden chains of liberty decorate, and the iron chains of slavery degrade.

* * *

THE antivivisectionist is a childless matron or a male or female old maid whose heart is too big to rest sweetly in the family cat.

* * *

THE moralists teach us that love is the final end of every action, but they seem to forget that liberty is the practical end.

* * *

THERE never was a great river into which no muddy water ran, nor a great man that was altogether great.

* * *

REFORMATION is abstract and it lies in the next village; a reformer is concrete and a pebble within our own shoe; we love reformation and hate the reformer.

THIEVERY is like a cannibal that fattens a man for a while with the intention of eating him later on.

* * *

GIVE a loaded revolver to an infant and a vote to an ignorant man, and the second crime is worse than the first.

* * *

DEMOCRACY is government by the people, not by the off-scouring of the people.

* * *

THE worst miser is the learned man that will not write.

* * *

HE WAS a cynical artist that first represented Justice in the form of a woman ; and why should he blindfold her ?

* * *

IF YOU would know the world go into a desert and study your own heart.

* * *

DELICACY of conscience is intended solely for home use.

* * *

CIVILIZATION is the world in a nap.

* * *

VINEGAR from a sweet wine and the anger of a good-natured man are very bitter.

Corruptio optimi pessima,— a patriot dead and rotten is a professional politician.

* * *

A MAN'S life in the world is like a bubble that arises in a lake. It glitters for an instant, bursts, and leaves no trace,— not even a blur on the water; or, it is like the leap of a minnow: it sends a tiny ripple atremble for a few feet, and then all is smooth again.

* * *

SELF-DEFENCE is not the first law of nature, but of corrupt nature. If nature were not corrupt there would be no need of self-defence.

* * *

DO NOT offend a man that is a close observer,— he never forgets.

* * *

THERE is a Latin distich to this effect: What is more fickle than the wind? — lightning. What than lightning? — fame. What than fame? — a woman. What than a woman? — nothing. The last answer should be,— a man.

* * *

In omnibus requiem quæsivi is a true rule of life if you translate it, In all things I sought peace.

* * *

THE Celt is the man that oftenest advances from peasant to half gentleman in the second generation.

The great differences between peoples are not to be observed solely between distinct nations. The Prussian differs from the Bavarian, the Piedmontese from the Neapolitan, the Yankee from the Virginian, almost as much as the Russian differs from the Turk.

* * *

"Great families last not three oaks," said Sir Thomas Browne. He should have said one oak. Great titles remain, the family changes. The English title Albemarle, according to Victor Hugo, has been held by six succeeding families, that of Leicester by five, of Lincoln by six, and of Pembroke by seven.

* * *

In James Puckle's "Grey Cap for a Green Head" is a presentation of the saying, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, which delighted Poe for its literary form. It is this: "In speaking of the dead, so fold up your discourse that their virtues may be shown outwardly, while their vices are wrapped in silence." It is said that O'Connell's translation of the aphorism was: "As each great rogue departs let all the rest deplore him." O'Connell's version is better in many cases than is Puckle's. It is an abuse of fair play to let a scoundrel escape merely because he lies where insolence is powerless. One might as well be gentle with him because he happened to be in jail.

Our lives are waves that come up out of the ocean of eternity, break upon the beach of earth, and lapse back to the ocean of eternity. Some are sunlit, some run in storm and rain; one is a quiet ripple, another is a thunderous breaker; and once in many centuries comes a great tidal wave that sweeps over a continent; but all go back to the sea and lie equally level there.

* * *

Life is a charity ball given by the leaders of society. A few dance, get their charity's worth to the last penny, and the poor stand outside the gate and watch with hungry eyes the glint of jewels in the warm air. Then comes the lackey Death and he says: "Madame and my Master, your carriage waits." So you go away into the dark and the dancing continues.

* * *

The largest, the oldest, and the greatest single family in the world is the Hebrew people. Those of pure blood are the descendants of one glorious saint, Abraham. They have produced the Blessed Virgin and Judas. Their existence to-day is a miracle, and the origin in some poet's brain of the legend of the Wandering Jew. Their persecutors pass away, but the Jew lives on and waxes stronger. He is a natural figure of the Church in this particular.

Our memories are record-books good enough for the fair deeds done us, but the injuries done us we engrave on brass.

* * *

There are two classes of tramps — the one well known to the police, and the other not so well known. The second is the moral tramp or the idle "gentleman." This latter, the baser rascal, is on the town, supported morally by an impatient community, but he should be in the workhouse.

* * *

The difference between a respectable citizen and most professional patriots or chronic politicians is like the difference between silver and quicksilver, — if you put your finger on silver you have a valuable article under it, if you try to put your finger on quicksilver you have nothing under it.

* * *

Americans are charged with lack of reverence, but it is nearer the truth to say that they like to stick a bodkin into an inflated lie. If parent, teacher, governor, or priest is worthy of reverence in himself, he gets it in the United States as quickly and as tenderly as in any country on earth; if he is not worthy of it, he gains little by putting an imposing mask before his face and crying booh! at the people here. This is a question of fact, not one of morality.

THE influence of England upon the United States is not an influence of blood, but of inherited laws and customs which is a deeper influence than that of blood,—a little yeast leavening the whole mass. America is anything but Anglo-Saxon in blood, and not a little Anglo-Saxon in laws and customs. These customs govern even the Latin races that come to us. Our law-courts, our army and navy etiquette, our colleges, are English more or less. Our crime of permitting uneducated boys to begin the study of law and medicine, our gross feeding, our wastefulness, our hypocritical primness before the public when that public is powerful, our shut doors and shut pianos on Sunday, are modern English. The American's stubborn insistence upon individual liberty from purely selfish motives, which selfishness does not hesitate to deny that liberty to foreigners by birth or creed and to the minority which differs from us in religion, as the Puritan denied it, is modern English.

* * *

THERE have been men that were heroes not only to their valets but to their widows.

* * *

MURDER one man and you will be hanged, murder a million men and the kinsmen of this million will erect marble statues to you; steal a loaf of bread and you will be sent to prison, steal a continent and you will be worshipped as a god.

We oblige our clergymen, lawyers, physicians, soldiers, engineers, to study for some years and to pass examinations which prove fitness for their work before we allow them to deal with our lives and property; but what do we require from the men that make our laws? We talk about the nobility of obedience to law, and we let the professional politician make the law. We entrust the safety of our property, children, civilization to ballot-buyers. We write impassioned words about human slavery, the negro, the Armenian, and we ourselves obey dramshop aldermen. Any one can be a patriot in time of war, but wars are scarce in America, and we need more patriotism in time of peace.

* * *

Suppose a miracle brought Solomon on earth again, and we were to ask him these questions:

"O King, live for ever, what thinkest thou of woman's suffrage?"

"What dost thou mean?"

"I mean that woman should vote for rulers."

"Vote for rulers? What is that?"

"Nowadays, O King, we cast into urns the written names of certain men from the people, and he whose name is written oftenest is chosen ruler in the land for a season."

"Have ye no king?"

"No,— we have politicians instead."

"And ye cast ballots for these politicians?"

"Ay, O King."

"Who are the electors?"

"Anything that walks on two legs, except babes, monkeys, and fowls. The legs must be twenty-one years of age and not red nor yellow; there is no objection to blacklegs."

"Your slaves?"

"Our slaves.—By the way we do not use that name at present. We keep up the state of slavery, of course, but we have abolished the name for sentimental reasons."

"And this woman's suffrage means that *women* also vote for rulers!"

"Even thus, O King, is it done in some of our provinces."

"No!"

"Yea, O King."

"I say, no! Impossible!"

"I say, yes!"—

"Let me die again!"

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

TEARS over an erring child may be as useless as rain on uprooted corn. See, therefore, that the corn be not uprooted — keep out the hogs.

* * *

THE child's obedience and the soldier's obedience should be the same, but there should be the element of love in the child's obedience.

* * *

A PEBBLE can turn a river on the crest of the Alleghanies to the Mississippi or to the Atlantic, and a touch can turn a child's heart from the world to God.

* * *

KEEP a child's heart so white that our Lady might walk across its snow without staining her sandal.

* * *

A MAN is made or unmade before his seventh year, and there is a special lower hell for fathers and mothers that have the "yes-dear" habit.

Every child is a diamond in the rough, and if the adult shine dimly the fault lies with the parent who as gem-cutter shaped the facets ignorantly or carelessly.

* * *

Letting a boy have his own way merely to keep him quiet is like giving a baby an open razor merely to keep it quiet, except that the first crime is more brutal than the second.

* * *

It is less difficult to understand the priest that handles the body of Christ thoughtlessly than the father or mother that handles a child's soul thoughtlessly. The priest can repent and repair, the father and mother can only repent.

* * *

A very homely cygnet may become a very beautiful swan;—it is neither kind nor wise to slight a boy.

* * *

A father that thinks his duty consists in bread-winning alone, is very ignorant. Bread-winning is altogether a secondary duty.

* * *

It is a popular error to think that the children of holy parents often are bad, because we are liable to mistake the church-going habit in parents for sanctity.

A LITTLE girl, eight years of age, toiling in a New England mill, was asked: "Who made you"? She answered, "God." "Why did He make you"? She answered, "To work"! That was a bitter response, but there was much truth in it.

* * *

WE ARE told to honor father and mother, and this law can be obeyed; but we cannot love parents unless they have striven to merit love. Natural resentment of parental harshness has often been mistaken for ingratitude.

* * *

EVERY street has many parents, but there is only a handful of fathers and mothers in a city.

* * *

PARENTS may toil in bitterness for years to clothe and feed a child and to pay school-bills; but if they have not won the child's love they have done nothing.

* * *

THERE are three men in the world that should never show natural anger — a judge, a schoolmaster, and a father.

* * *

CHILDREN should be taught the nobility of obedience. Voluntary obedience to law is one of the greatest privileges of man.

MANY a child has been spoiled by too much governing; but a worse fault in parents is to command twice. Orders should not be given thoughtlessly, but when rightly given it is criminal in parents to yield.

* * *

IF THE history of a family in which insanity has appeared is traced back for two or three generations, one nearly always finds a parent that frequently yielded to temptations to anger or impurity, or to gluttony in meat or drink.

* * *

A HOUSE-KITTEN and a tiger are both cats, and a baby's pout and the murderer's rage are both anger. The kitten will not become a tiger, but the baby's rage can readily become the murderer's rage. Then God asks the parents: "Why did *you* permit this"?

* * *

JUDGE a man in his everyday work; judge a child in his play.

* * *

A PARENT that beats an erring child to-day is a bully that maltreats a weaker human being for a malfeasance in office of which he himself was guilty a year ago.

* * *

THE boy is beginning manhood that can shut his teeth against an escaping thought.

THE cause of failure in school-teachers is that many men and women mistake what is a mission from God for a trade.

* * *

THERE is some truth in the assertion of modern criminologists that crime is hereditary: it descends upon children from the moral atony of parents.

* * *

AN UNMARRIED man is a person with one soul to save; a father is a man with two or more souls to save.

* * *

YOU and I have very sound notions concerning the discipline of our neighbors' children.

* * *

IF CHILDREN were taught the lore of obedience, and if they put into practice this beautiful science, there would be no police nor lawyers in the world, and even the confessional might be filled with cobwebs.

* * *

WHEN one considers the responsibilities of parents, it would seem that only carefully educated men and women should marry. It does not, however, require genius to raise children. Holiness in the parent is all that is necessary; but it requires as much holiness to fulfil the obligations of a father or a mother as to observe those of a priest or a nun.

PLUTARCH said ('De Educat. Puer.,' cap. xix.): "The essential things in the education of the young are to teach them to worship the gods, to revere their parents, to honor their elders, to obey the laws, to submit to rulers, to love their friends, to be temperate." These, strange to say, are just the branches of learning the modern "education" ignores.

* * *

MOST modern school-teachers are like boys that trample a thousand blades of growing wheat in gathering one poor, useless corn-flower.

* * *

WE SHOW reverence to old age when we should show it to childhood.

* * *

AFTER one impure book a child's soul is like a blossoming rose-tree uprooted.

* * *

THERE are parents that nag at children half a lifetime and then have the stupendous shamelessness to call this "salutary correction" and "an effect of love"! Izaak Walton, in 'The Complete Angler,' also said: "Thus use your frog: put your hook, I mean the arming wire, through his mouth, and out at his gills, and then with a fine needle and silk sew the upper part of his leg with only one stitch to the arming wire of your hook, . . . and in so doing use him as though you loved him."

ART, LITERATURE AND BEAUTY

ART, LITERATURE AND BEAUTY

THAT art is best which suggests most. Art is like a tone, which is always made up of a fundamental note with its true harmonics and over-harmonics out to immensity.

* * *

THERE is no difficulty in defining poetry,—it is merely an expression of the beautiful in rhythmical language; but what is beauty?

* * *

WHEN an artist sees the full countenance of Content, like the head of the Gorgon, it strikes him into stone.

* * *

THE poet is not only a seër and a maker, he is also God's almoner of the beautiful for us that sit without the gates.

* * *

CARDAN ('Prudentia Civilis,' cap. xc.) says: "In universum nil prosunt literæ ni tympanum pulset aliquis." Behold the fundamental notion for the book-reviewer's existence!

THE perfect critic is one, as Sir Boyle Roche would say, that sees with the eyes of posterity.

* * *

What a philosopher thinks, and *how* a poet thinks, interest us.

* * *

THE critic is often the conscience of the literary family and the artist is obliged to be the agent; just as in the ordinary family the wife is commonly the conscience and the husband is the agent. These critical and wifely consciences are very sensitive precisely because they need not become agents.

* * *

MUSICAL expression is like the misty outline of Milton's imagery; poetical expression is like the clear-cut imagery of Dante.

* * *

RELIABILITY in art and the golden-rod bloom late in summer.

* *

BEHIND my dwelling is a small lake, which in the day holds the sun and clouds, and in the night it holds the moon and a million white worlds; but it is not so deep as a poet's heart.

* * *

A POEM sings with a bad accent in any language not its own.

MEN shoot plunderers of the dead on the battle-field; but we praise our authors that plunder the dead, since we do not know enough to recognize the theft.

* * *

THE most sorrowful poem, except Lear, ever written, and one of the noblest, is the Book of Job.

* * *

MR. WILLIAM WATSON writes:—

> "I close your Marlowe's page, my Shakspere's ope,
> How welcome—after gong and cymbal din—
> The continuity, the long, slow slope,
> And vast curves of the gradual violin!"

What would he have said had he been forced to read the fashionable novel and then been given Shakspere as a relief?

* * *

YOU must use a bit to make a safe man, a safe artist, and a safe horse.

* * *

WE GO to a book as Narcissus went to the fountain,—see ourselves therein, and are enamored.

* * *

A TRANSLATION of a poem is like a plastercast of a statue or a photograph of a painting; and the better the translation the poorer the original poem.

Our critics, almost without exception, defend certain poets and novelists, who, though impure, have something that is beautiful in their minds; but if you cut open a goat and find his belly stuffed with rosebuds is the beast any the less a goat?

* * *

Poets and novelists speak eloquently of the awful mystery of life. There is no mystery in life except when sin clouds the light. Love God and every world-mystery will vanish.

* * *

The artist is often the first to forget that the sole material he is allowed to use is the beautiful. He may go into the hospital, prison, slum, in the search for that, but he must not bring back filth and call it beauty, much less may he call it art.

* * *

If you would keep your artistic faculties keen for production and judgment do not chop flesh with them. Plotinus said: "A soul not beautiful cannot attain to the intuition of beauty."

* * *

The creations of some dramatists are mere works of art, those of Shakspere are personal friends or enemies. Lear is more real than Washington.

* * *

The essayist is an artisan that can gild old silver.

SMALL poets set their poems against a melancholy background as goldsmiths set cheap jewels against black velvet — to get contrast-accentuation.

* * *

A BOOK is very like a money-changer: it pays you back in another form what you bring to it.

* * *

A MAN who holds that bread and butter and a home are necessary or even worth thinking about will never become a great artist.

* * *

BEAUTY is truth and goodness, crowned with flowers or with thorns, and hovering above the earth just beyond our touch; but many of our artists think that beauty is life and sense, crowned with flowers or with thorns, and walking upon the earth.

* * *

STYLE is not the gold setting of the diamond, thought; it is the glitter of the diamond itself.

* * *

THE poet and the saint are both artists; the former consciously pursues his ideal, the latter unconsciously possesses his ideal.

* * *

THE ideal is the real seen from the foretop before it rises for the man on deck, and softened and enlarged in a mist of distance.

All "tillers of paper" sow old grain for seed, but there is a vast difference between the husbandman that labors with the tilth and a crow that carries off the corn, between the scholar and the plagiarist.

* * *

It is curious to note the rhythmical flow of the tides of passion in a Shaksperian play. Lear and Othello pass from crest to hollow as regularly as a sea wave. There is a similar rhythm in wars, epidemics, fashions in dress, and fashions in art-criticism.

* * *

Some men's brains are so badly crowded with books that nothing can move therein.

* * *

Shakspere is the only English poet that has created a perfect man, like the good Kent, for example. Milton's man would have the flaw of bigotry, Shelley's would be morbid, Wordsworth's would lack Christianity, Byron's would be tinged with sensual selfishness, Coleridge would never be completed, Keats's would be a "cad" like Porphyrio, Tennyson's would be intolerably pale like Arthur, Browning's would be cynical, and so on.

* * *

When we talk about the dearth of poets we forget that every mother is a poet for her babe.

THE worst effect of literary fiction is that it makes us demand perfection in others rather than in ourselves.

* * *

ALL that is good in modern civilization is an effect of man's instinctive sense of the ideal working in an atmosphere of Christianity; and the idealism of Him whose kingdom is not of this world is the cause of the fecundity of Christianity. The ideal in art is the vital fusion of what is best in many beautiful things, the ideal in sanctity is the result of the vital fusion of what is best in many moral things. In each case the ideal is the highest reality, as Christ our ideal is the highest reality.

* * *

THE rationally agreeable is often beautiful, but not always so. The irrationally agreeable is never beautiful. Complacency in the irrationally agreeable is never art.

* * *

POETRY seems to be like the wild deer: as civilization advances both withdraw, and we find the poor tame substitute.

* * *

SENSE is good in itself, but deordination, setting sense in the first place, is sin in morals and art. The strange part of this truism is that it has ceased to be a truism.

A CAUSE of failure with many artists is that they feed their minds with pastry and sugar instead of bread and meat.

* * *

ARTISTS, naturally eager, leap to conclusions; they have not patience to take the intermediate steps. There is, therefore, a tendency to study the art of beauty to the neglect of the science of beauty; and this neglect makes the art of beauty weaker than it would otherwise be.

* * *

IF REALISM is art, let us crown the camera and the barrel of plaster-of-paris.

* * *

A POET carrying a thought from his mind into expression is like a child bearing a bucket brimming with water from the well to the house,—part of the contents is spilled.

* * *

THE highest beauty has the quality of strength, hence it is masculine. The greatest sculptors made it masculine, almost without exception. The first characteristic of even the Venus of Milo is power.

* * *

THE ultimate atoms of every material thing are in proportion, and there is beauty wherever proportion exists.

THE legend of Proteus must have originated in the mind of one that had perceived the wonderfully varied effects the same work of art produces on different observers.

* * *

THE true criticism of Shakspere and of Dante has not yet begun. Critics grow drunk with the strength of the wine and praise foolishly instead of justly; or they cry out in their own maudlin voices and assure us that Shakspere and Dante are speaking.

* * *

A SMALL poet is like a clock: he is constantly repeating himself.

* * *

DANTE is a great storm-cloud: lightning and rain below, sunshine above.

* * *

A CLASSIC author is often a mummified writer who has been set up as a quintain against which only the mightier critics tilt.

* * *

ONE quality that sets Shakspere as an artist above Isaiah, Æschylus, Dante, Michel Angelo, and Beethoven, is his silent peace. He is like a still top of an Alpine peak where no footprint stains the eternal snow. He is almost as peaceable as Saint Thomas Aquinas.

A GRAVE error in Shaksperian criticism is to consider Hamlet or any other character as reflections of the master's own mind.

* * *

GOETHE is like an *aula maxima* in a German university decorated with copies of ancient Greek statues.

* * *

THE age of the epic had passed in England even before Chaucer's time and it will never return unless civilization is destroyed and started toward reconstruction. The 'Nibelungenlied' was the last northern epic. 'Paradise Lost' is a beautiful but defective modern restoration of an epic, a model to be kept in a museum; the real epic was for practical use.

* * *

COVENTRY PATMORE was a golden eagle blinded in one eye. He could soar against the sun but he could not see on both sides of his gyre.

* * *

ONE of the books seen by Pantagruel in the Library of Saint Victor's was a "Quæstio Subtilissima — utrum Chimæra in Vacuo Bombinans Possit Comedere Secundas Intentiones" (whether a Chimæra booming around in a vacuum could eat second intentions). This would serve as title for nine-tenths of the books published at present.

ATMOSPHERE is everything to a small artist; some men would paint perfectly in heaven. The real artist, however, can work in a factory.

* * *

NO PAINTER can produce the light and shadow of nature in the pitch of the original model; he therefore begins in a lower key. The same law holds in sanctity when we would copy Christ in our souls; but a mistake we always make is that our key is too low, or if we take the proper key we do not finish the picture.

* * *

THE class of idolaters never diminishes; it merely changes images and ceremonial. Natural man tends toward the concrete, the palpable, the physically visible; — hence our idolaters as well as our artists. Plutus, Venus, Mercury, Mars, have no incense, at so much the ounce, burned before their statues, but that is the only change in their cult. To-day, as of old, the flesh is visible, the spirit is heard of as if by letter from across seas.

* * *

TRUE critics, like poets, are born and partly made — *ars est homo additus Naturæ* — but the natural critic and the natural poet are musicians that play by ear, or they are silver in the ore which must be refined before it becomes useful.

"Qui Pythia cantat,
Tibicen didicit prius, extimuitque magistrum."

God is too true a poet to make ugliness when He was free to make beauty. It is strange that one hears the exclamation, "Oh, how beautiful!" coming from the heart oftener in the pathological laboratory than in the artist's studio; and there is no beauty so deep, so sweet, as the beauty of Death. "Blessed be God for our sister, the Death of the body," said Francis of Assisi. We do not understand; we dread in our childishness the kiss of God through the dark.

* * *

A remarkable vagary of modern criticism is the serious dispute concerning morality in art. That is not an open question. We must require the same morality in art that we require in a woman, and this entirely for æsthetic reasons. Immorality is not beauty, and art has nothing to do with anything which is not beautiful. This is not a limitation of art, because beauty is everywhere, from the light on a child's forehead up to its source in God.

* * *

We make pleasure and use our own in youth, we make charity and art our own after mid-life. He is a holy man that is charitable before his thirty-fifth year, because charity is a noble wisdom in which sorrowful experience is vivified by grace and magnanimity. Art before mid-life is often affectation, for a human soul is very slowly soluble in beauty.

If you doubt that truth is necessary to beauty as an object of art, consider your sentiments in the presence of a clever actor. The faintest infidelity to absolute truth in the actor's reproduction of nature is noticeable, and if the actor is excellent his slight flaws grow painful to us as are discords in music. This is an outcome of an innate fitness for truth, which we cannot control more than we can control the circulation of the blood. What we call depth of passion in a player is merely another name for truth, for adequation between what we see and what would be seen in nature. Surely beauty is the "splendor of truth" as it is perfected good.

* * *

Coventry Patmore wrote in 'Religio Poetæ': "Peace, which is as much above joy as joy is above pleasure . . . can scarcely be called emotion, since it rests, as it were, in final good, the *primum mobile*, which is without emotion." If he had said it *finally rests* in the *primum mobile*, his words would be more convincing. There is extremely deep emotion in the rising tide of Peace before that last flood is reached. The highest poetry and the highest sanctity consist in contemplation with emotion. It is written in the 'Fioretti': "Saint Francis remained until dawn ever repeating, 'My God! My God!' and no other word," but Saint Francis wept all the while.

A PERFECT prose expression is a reproduction of a thought in pastel; a perfect poetic expression of the same thought would be a reproduction in oil colors: or the prose expression of a thought is a translation into another language, the true poetic expression being the thought in its original tongue.

* * *

SMALL critics say that poetry is no longer valued. It is impossible for man not to be pleased with poetry, because this liking is grounded in his nature. These critics forget that a true poet comes among us only once in a generation, sometimes not once in a century; and that certain civilized nations never produce a great poet. We suffer from dearth of poets, not from lack of love for poetry.

* * *

THERE is no rest in creation, all is rhythm, or at least the unrest of change. In the interstellar spaces, where absolute zero may be and no ponderable thing, ether vibrates rhythmically as heat vibrates in every thing on earth from fire to frost. And rhythm will last eternally. Before time was, God was in absolute rest as He alone now is. With His primal fiat, the instant He clothed in substance His first angel and called him good, or rather beautiful, harmonious unrest began, to go on forever. Beyond the farthest thought-journey of the oldest archangel there is neither rest nor

unrest, only God; yet one day unrest will pass chiming in strange rhythm into this still darkness and beyond. When the ultimate star has cooled to disintegrating rest the vibrations of unrest will be but beginning, spreading out forever in the great concentric singing waves that God upheaved by His one whispered creative word.

* * *

The law of probability is the law most frequently broken in the modern novel and drama.

* * *

The more perfect the adequation between the beautiful image in the artist's mind and its expression the higher the art produced, supposing the mental image to be beautiful. This adequation is truth; — hence the pleasure of the intellect in beauty. All beauty is truth, but all truth is not beauty. Where falsehood enters beauty is defective, exactly as truth would be defective.

* * *

Lowell, in his 'Essay on Chaucer', says that "Art should be 'the world's sweet inn' whither we repair for refreshment and repose." The artist himself must not accept this assertion literally: if he looks upon art as a mere delight he will not rise above vulgarity. An ever-present dread of sacrilege is the only spirit that creates, except when the artist is magnificently endowed.

Walt Whitman was the last of the Centaurs,—half man and half beast.

* * *

You cannot produce art nor judge art if your eye is dimmed with sense. There is a glib saying, invented by the devil and used by his servants,—"All things are pure to the pure of heart." The correct text is: All things are pure to the pure of heart for about five minutes. Art deals with beauty, and sensuality is not beauty, no matter how cleverly it is gilded.

* * *

It needs no demonstration to establish the truism that beauty which approaches nearest God's beauty is the highest beauty. His essence is the ultimate measure of beauty as of truth and goodness. There is no question here of the beauty that pleases most the human compound, but of the beauty that actually ranks first. While we are in the body we must use the body; we are too weak to rest sweetly in the keen upper air of the intellectual, of the spiritual, but beauty is there as in its home. In these valleys we forever mistake the agreeable for the beautiful. "The true order of going or of being led by others to the things of love," said Plato, in the 'Symposium,' "is to use the beauties of earth as steps, along which we mount upward for the sake of the higher beauty."

The great historian goes before the tomb and cries: "Lazarus, come forth"! and the dead arises.

* * *

It is strange what a liking the poets have had for this thought, which Tennyson, in 'Locksley Hall' used last:—

"A sorrow's crown of sorrows
Is remembering happier things."

Shelley ('Prometheus Unbound,' act ii., sc. 1) says:—

"Thou comest as the memory of a dream
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet."

In Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Fair Maid of the Inn,' Baptista says:—

"To have been happy, Madam, adds to calamity."

Chaucer ('Troilus and Criseyde,' iii., 1625) has it:—

"For of fortunes sharp adversitee
The worst kinde if infortune is this,
A man to have been in prosperitee,
And it remembren, whan it passed is."

He takes the thought as if from Dante's words in the 'Inferno' (canto v.):—

"Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria."

The original sentence, perhaps, was in Boëthius' 'De Consolatione Philosophiæ' (l. 2, pr. 4): "In omni adversitate fortunæ infelicissimum genus est infortunii fuisse felicem et non esse."

THE pernicious dispute that arises periodically concerning the comparative merit of Idealism and Realism is kept alive through the ill-advised admission that such distinction in art exists. Here is a quarrel *de lana caprina*. There is neither Idealism nor Realism as these terms are commonly understood. We have true art, which, in a certain sense, may be called Idealism, and a spurious art, which is this Realism. Art of any species is a revolt against the commonplace, against the anarchy and injustice that man puts into ordinary life. The artist is forever striving toward beauty and its concomitants; he endeavors to compose material presented by Nature into forms more beautiful than those that fill his everyday world. He takes many images and fuses them into one, giving life to this single resulting creation. If he is a great artist, he makes this fictitious creation real, alive. Recognition of that reality, but not of its full meaning, has given rise to what has been perverted into modern Realism. Whether a model is reproduced literally, or its copy is wrought better than itself, makes no difference, so far as the æsthetic quality is concerned,—except in so much as the notion of degree is considered; creation is always more valuable than a plaster-cast, but the literal copy and the new creation may both be art. The Idealist creates, and his creation must be expressed with the realism of life as it is and prescinding

from the notion of art. The Realist holds in theory, but not in practice, that the artist should copy existing models, and stop at that. We have here a leap to a conclusion for which there is no justifying premise; and the opinion, instinctive or reasoned, of all great artists is against the doctrine of the Realist. The error of confusing Romance with Idealism makes the question more difficult of comprehension by the Realist. Romance is idealistic to a great extent in the choice of material, and, if good, it is realistic in expression. Realism, in any case, has to do with expression, not with subject-matter. It is like a mould, it *touches* its model; therefore it tends toward materialism, and usually neglects spirituality, in which is the highest beauty.

* * *

The poet as seër wanders through the world storing his mind with wisdom and with a million forms of beauty; then he turns to his treasury of memories, and taking two or a hundred beautiful things he gives them to his imagination and intellect to mould into a new creation that is one and vivified. Again, he stands rapt in the actual presence of Nature and he interprets her hidden meaning for us. Whether they go down into the abyss of man's soul or up above the Rose of the Blessed for the marble they hew into new beauty, all great poets work alike, yet all work in different lines,

for each was sent with a special revelation. Even God Himself works like other poets, and He has deigned to set a strange model for the artist. His Intellect looked in upon His own Essence as if upon a divine imagination, and from the totality of its infinite beauty-forms He moulded a single work, *et Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis!* There was the expression; and in the night at Bethlehem went out the tiny cry of a new-born babe. Like Charoba in Gebir at the first sight of the sea, we ask, "Is this the mighty ocean? Is this all"? Yes, all. One narrow cry, yet we hear the height and the depth of God's master-poem, we know the limits of God as an artist.

* * *

Created beauty is loosely said to consist in the manifold in unity, *il più nell' uno;* God's beauty is His infinite perfection. Infinity is the highest unity, and in a certain sense it carries the notion of multitude beyond limit. The beauty of a spirit other than God, as the human soul, is, I think, multitude in simplicity rather than multitude in unity, since its perfection lies more in simplicity than in mere unity, and this multitude in simplicity is not a paradox when rightly understood. Simplicity in spirits not divine is a shadow of God's unity wherein is the highest beauty. God's multiplicity, which is a relative, not an absolute attribute, is simultaneous; the soul's multiplicity,

also relative, is consecutive. Our spirit acts so rapidly that it appears to do two things at once, but this is not really the case. It understands, then wills. True, it wills, and is simultaneously the principle of the complicated metabolism of the body, but in the office of vital principle it acts by its mere presence, as it were, not as dividing its spiritual action. Unity is the quality in matter that reflects spiritual simplicity, and by unity is not meant mere individuality. An harmonious color-chord or a sound-chord are practically as simple, through unity, as a single color or a single note, and these chords have the additional charm of multiplicity. Rich single tones are rich by multiplicity of overtones, and so for rich single colors. The juxtaposition found in the multiplicity of material beauty is the correlative of the consecutive activity in spiritual beauty. There are, then, three grades of beauty, of which the third and lowest, or material beauty, is a reflection of the second, which is spiritual beauty; and the second is a reflection of the Divine Beauty.

* * *

Truth and goodness should first be partially considered, that beauty may be more intelligible. Things are true because they agree with the intellect that created or uttered them. Every actual entity is in absolute unison with its model in God's mind. He is all-wise, free, almighty, and

everything that is must be what it is seen, willed, and made to be by Him.

> "God is the perfect poet,
> Who in creation acts His own conception."

Even our feeble creations are true, so far as they agree with the pre-conceived ideas of them in our souls. That "the promise still outruns the deed" does not overset this doctrine.

> "Our whitest pearl we never find,
> Our ripest fruit we never reach;
> The flowering moments of the mind
> Drop half their petals in our speech."

The petals, however, that we do see are true. Falsity in actual things is nothing; it is a mere reason-concept predicated of our creations. A poem is loosely said to be false that halts short of the beauty in the poet's soul; a portrait is untrue that gives only half the man, part of what may be seen in his outward semblance, but this means merely that the full truth is not expressed. Falsehood in its radical meaning has to do with will or judgment, not with being.

Again, all that is, is good at the heart of it, from an Archangel to Lucifer. Being in reference to an intellect, is the true; in reference to a will, it is the good. Truth and goodness are not realities superadded to being; they are relations to an intellect and a will, yet these relations are not a mere *color d'erba che viene e va.* The uttermost

star is in the central hollow of God's hand, and He never sleeps. His intellect forever turns its infinitude of light as fully upon the nucleus of a plant-cell as upon the immensity of Himself — "I know My own." All things that ever have been, that are, that will or may be, in their entity, are terms of the Divine Will, which wished or can wish to give them existence; hence the very essence of the good is found in every created being as in the one uncreated Being.

All things, however, are not equally good. The question of perfection enters here. Each being considered in itself has a certain degree of perfection which constitutes its intrinsic goodness; it is, moreover, good in its own regard, or with regard to something else. The perfect is, etymologically, that which is fully made, and a being has perfection because it is either complete, fully made, in itself, or it makes for perfection by contributing toward the completion, adornment, of some other entity. That which gives perfection, complete or partial, to a thing is the good; and, as such, the good is an object of will-appetence.

There is a propensity or positive tendency in every will toward the good which is an end for the will-adorned being, and this tendency is called appetence; — rational appetence when the eliciting knowledge comes through the intellect, sensible when it comes through the senses. Once again, the true is an object under the white light of the

intellect, the good is the same object under the light, red if you like, of the will.

Now, the intellect looks at various objects and it stops at one that it finds to be unusually complete, perfected, very good. This object has a rounded, flawless, full unity with coördinated variety, although the intellect may not clearly see all that, and the appetence of the intellect is satisfied, set at rest, by the conformity of this object with its own nature which delights in moulding the single judgment out of coördinated variety in terms. Secondly, this completed good, root, stem, and blossom, is presented to the will which recognizes it as good, but as good not needed for the will's own perfection; and the will-appetence, which is awakened by good in any shape, rests after mere contemplation in this case. That particular good is worth looking at for sheer pleasure of looking, prescinding from any notion of having. Such good is the beautiful.

There may be a will tendency toward this good, but it is a tendency halting in the first wonder of contemplation. Beauty is a cause of love, but not by any means so potent a cause as goodness. We may be surrounded by beauty and remain very slightly affected ethically. This seems paradoxical, since beauty is perfected good. We can love a beautiful object for the good in it below the beautiful, especially when the good is not spiritual, but in the presence of the higher beauty we stop con-

tent in the vision; indeed, we always love beauty more because it is good than because it is beautiful. A beautiful face with no good behind it never held love. Beauty, then, is goodness with the glamour of a fuller perfection upon it, the bush crowned with a rose which untouched beyond our neighbor's hedge delights us. And the very practical conclusion to be drawn from all this dry metaphysics is that art which lacks truth and goodness is not art.

* * *

Art is not nature, it is an elevation of nature; it is the sister of sanctity. "Be ye perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect," is its constant warning-cry. True art exalts nature, false art indulges natural instincts. True art is ascetic, restrained; false art is sentimental or sensual. The Saint makes heroic efforts toward possession of the supreme good, the real artist makes heroic effort toward possession of the supreme beauty. There are pain and delight in heroic effort. The Saint holds the flesh in check, because the flesh clouds the vision; the artist holds the flesh in check for exactly the same reason, since the supreme beauty is not more in the flesh than is the supreme good. Art has by no means reached the clear air of the mountain-top, even when Shakspere was its standard-bearer. Saint Paul was a man with great natural capability for the grace of sanctity; Shakspere was a man with great natural capability for

the gift of art; Saint Paul, however, probably went farther in sanctity than Shakspere went in art, because Saint Paul held the flesh better in leash.

The artist will grope, perhaps forever; his pathway is not clear as is the pathway of the saint, because the natural tendency toward the good is deeper, more valuable, than the natural tendency toward the beautiful, and on that account, perhaps, God has made the pathway toward the good clearer for man. We *must* make the good, true or false, our own; we may not make beauty our own, because the very essence of beauty is perfected goodness and truth *contemplated.* No one doubts that high goodness is of the spirit, few believe that high beauty is of the spirit; hence, the groping. True art would descend upon the earth were all artists convinced that beauty is spiritual. Then the world might evolve an artist far greater than Shakspere, who is the perfect artist as the doctrine of art now stands, which makes beauty part spirit, part slime. There is, however, no more hope for this conversion of the artists than there is for a general conversion of sinners toward sanctity.

Should art, then, be moral? Yes, positively; never anything else than moral, when you understand the meaning of the word morality, which by no means is indicative of sentimentality and Gothic vestments. It is the only correct motive force for every breath and step. It has to do

with God, and God is the only thing in the world, and over the world, and under the world, day and night, year in and year out, forever and forever. The artist may doubt this statement now, but he will not doubt it a second after the death-rattle.

But, he objects, the spirit is abstract; art is concrete. In the first place, the spirit is no more abstract, in the sense in which he uses the term, than is his pencil. It is not an adequation, a quality, an accident. While we are in the body here on earth we must use images. It is easy, pleasant, to receive impressions through images, and art must not be painful in its communicating, however painful it be in its production. Spiritual beauty, nevertheless, can be presented by images just as well as material beauty up to that degree at which we are forced to halt, not so much for lack of images as for lack of power to understand the spirit. Then, it is a grave error to think that art *must* consist in images, must be sensuous, as all the critics hold, accepting this valuable doctrine of Milton literally. The modern custom of swallowing in their entirety assertions fed to us by great men has been the cause of much moral indigestion. There will be higher art in the next life than any we can dream of here, and it is certain we shall not use images there, at least until after the resurrection, and I doubt we shall need them then.

THERE is the particular danger in the artistic temperament to stop content in expression of virtue without going on into act in which alone virtue consists.

«E disiar vedeste senza frutto.»

The artist can speak of the beauty and loveliness of charity until his own eyes grow misty and the hearts of his hearers quicken, but on the way home from the lecture he will pass a beggar heedlessly because it is so troublesome to unbutton one's overcoat to get at a purse. The artistic conscience often is largely in emotions, but it is satisfied and lulled to sleep with vivid images and tears; and there is nothing in the spiritual life more worthless than tears. One moment of hard, rational determination to avoid sin is worth a saucerful of tears.

* * *

A PAINTER makes a portrait by selecting the comparatively few individualizing lines in a given countenance, and all artists work in the same manner. Real history also is produced by a like method, and the historian should be an artist that selects and arranges the material furnished to him; if he follows dates he is a mere chronicler. Shakspere put Cordelia's whole soul into a hundred lines, so that we know her perfectly, and historians should learn this craft. One cannot compress the facts of a thirty-years' war into a volume that may be read in a day, unless there is

a very judicious selection. By trying to tell everything historians usually tell nothing. They must learn to pick out the portrait-lines. We make a great mistake when we think that any patient scholar can become an historian. Historians and poets are born and partly made.

* * *

We always see the beautiful in art darkly through at least two glasses, sometimes through three or even four. The artist creates the beauty in his own mind; he next passes it through the dark glass of his own faculty of expression, then we let it pass through the darker receiving glass of our faculty of comprehension, that varies in density as men vary. If the art is dramatic, the beautiful passes first out through the poet's expression into written words, then into the actor's soul through the actor's power of receptivity, that differs as men differ, then out through the actor's power of expression, then, fourthly, into the minds of the audience, through hundreds of varying receptive lenses. How little of the original sunlight should be left when the ray enters the last chamber! And when it does enter as a flame into this last chamber, as sometimes happens, how glorious must it not have been in the artist's mind before any attempt at expression!

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

HIGH love and familiarity are bitter enemies.

* * *

"CHI puo dir com' egli arde è in picciol fuoco," said Petrarch, who never learned what love is. The deeper the love is the easier it is to tell it; words are entirely unnecessary. Comprehension by the beloved is altogether another thing, which depends on the love felt by the beloved for the lover.

* * *

HERE on earth we are close to our friends as the roots of trees are close to one another; then comes death, and for a while, like the trunks of the trees, we are separated; but presently we meet above as do the sunlit boughs.

* * *

A COMMON error is to confuse our complacency in receiving affection with love for the person that gives that affection. Many women marry under this error.

NATURAL love feeds upon illusion, supernatural love upon reality. Give reality to the former and it starves; give illusion to the latter and it dies.

* * *

THE Abbè Roux asked, "What is love"? and he answered, "Two souls and one flesh." Love is anything but that! It is one soul and no flesh. Jelalu-D-Dîn told us long ago that the countersign at the door of Love when he asks, "Who goeth there"? is not, "It is I"! but, "It is thyself"!

* * *

HE GIVES a ripe apple for an apple-blossom that changes an old love for a new.

* * *

IF YOU intend to use a horse a whole day and a love for a lifetime, keep the reins taut in the morning.

* * *

A MAN that is deeply in love with himself will probably succeed in his suit owing to lack of rivals.

* * *

THE consolation offered in sorrow by certain good-hearted friends is like dusting a chronometer's works with a broom.

* * *

TWO women exchange confidence in the first person, two men in the third.

One should not even in jest be discordant with the beloved. This is a part of the sanctity of love, not morbidity.

* * *

Love, art, and sanctity have the same fundamental laws. The principles of unity, completeness, selection, and dignity are identical for the three. The unity of the manifold in love is wonderfully like the unity of the manifold in beauty, but love differs from beauty in having the superadded note of a desire for possession. Love is the beautiful with its quality of goodness so predominant that it excites a will-appetence, and its quality of truth so marked that it satisfies the intellect. This constitutes real or spiritual love, which is unchangeable. Physical love is changeable because the truth and goodness therein are hollow, as are all material things.

* * *

Love between a man and a woman of equal mind is like fluid in a U-tube,—always at a level in the two arms. Great love on one side and little love on the other exists only in novels. There can be one-sided physical love, but that is not worthy the name love.

* * *

There is a subtle connection between love and truth, as there is between love and beauty, because the chief sin against love is deceit.

A MAN that is not just and humble is incapable of deep friendship.

* * *

WHEN there is real cause for jealousy between lovers, selfish animal love in the injured party gains the ascendency and excludes the essential diffusiveness of genuine or spiritual love, if this rare genuine love ever existed in the special instance. Where there is no real cause for jealousy, as in the case of Othello, the jealousy is always the effect of base mistrust and selfishness. The selfishness is often disguised under forms of justice and honor. Othello's jealousy was altogether probable, but the Moor never loved Desdemona with real love

* * *

GOD is the only lover that has a right to be jealous, because His perfections are infinitely superior to the perfections of any other being, and divided love in His case is an insult. That is the reason a man may love his wife or child only in God. Christian love must be only a phase of love for God, and it is therefore infinitely deep. The natural passion called love has no element whatever of genuine love in it; it is intense selfishness even where it exists between a mother and child. That a mother gladly sacrifices life for a child through natural affection is merely a subtle form of selfishness: she chooses an evil less painful to herself than the evil of seeing the child suffer.

CHARITY, OBEDIENCE, HUMILITY

CHARITY, OBEDIENCE, HUMILITY

CHARITY is like the object-glass of a telescope—the broader you make it here on earth, the farther you can see into heaven.

* * *

IT IS strange that freedom is a mere effect of right servitude. We boast of our freedom, whereas the proudest boast is: "I am a slave of God"!

* * *

OBEDIENCE made the difference between Michael and Lucifer, nay, in a certain sense, between Christ and Lucifer.

* * *

THE chief evil of society is not so much a lack of faith as a lack of charity.

* * *

CONFIDENCE is not an autumnal flower.

* * *

THE virtues are a chaplet of pearls whose two-stranded cord is made of pleached obedience and charity.

Be mindful of humility: the gale that breaks the pine does not bruise the violet.

* * *

A youth's knowledge, like the cheap muskets sold to savages, is liable to go off at half-cock, or burst, and damage bystanders or its owner.

* * *

Love and obedience are so closely related that one may be the cause of the other.

* * *

Love is a ray of white light, and obedience its spectral iris beyond the prism. The prism is God's will.

* * *

There is no rebellion in God, but there is infinite obedience notwithstanding He is the Master.

* * *

Our Lord thought so much of obedience that it cost Him His life. He nailed Himself to a cross, as block is clamped to block, so that He could not disobey our commands.

* * *

Envy is the pace-maker for success in the race of life.

* * *

If you would find out whether a man is really modest, censure his work.

If you preach yourself you will gain yourself, and that for all eternity; but it is to be doubted that your prize will be worth the labor.

* * *

When a man makes a great mistake in life, he says, "I was a fool!" and he thinks the earnestness of this confession atones for the foolishness.

* * *

If you would sound the depth of a man's faith, let fall your plummet into his charity; one is the measure of the other.

* * *

Hold up a dandelion-tuft and puff its arrowlets down the wind; spring will find the sward strewn with "harmless gold." Do a deed of charity here, and you will awake after the winter of life to find your pathway strewn with eternal flowers.

* * *

Some poisons have more than one antidote, and an excellent secondary antidote for pride is obedience.

* * *

Pride is a splinter in the flesh, festering and painful till we pluck it out.

* * *

Any strong man can fight Blame, but only a saint can fight Praise.

"One grain of rice
Shoots a green feather gemmed with fifty pearls;"

and one deed of charity planted here will be a laden rose-tree in the garden of Christ.

* * *

Narcissus starved to death gazing in rapture at his own face reflected in a pool. Our hearts are starving through like foolishness, and we have not Narcissus' excuse of compelling beauty.

* * *

Humility is a state of mind in which we get the grace to quit lying to ourselves.

* * *

Boards of public charity were invented by the devil to prevent real individual charity.

* * *

God have mercy on the man that thinks he has done his duty when he has paid his poor-tax!

* * *

The charitable man is like an apple-tree: he gives his fruit and is silent. The philanthropist is like a hen.

* * *

It has been said that the Blessed Virgin's greatest grace consisted in her perfect response to grace. This is merely another name for obedience.

THE most effectual prayer ever made is a coin put for God's sake in the poor-box.

* * *

IF YOU have no charity your soul is not much better than a disinfectant — it serves only to keep your body free from the action of bacteria.

* * *

THOMAS À KEMPIS says the gate of heaven is so low that only children enter there.

* * *

THE pronoun "I" has credit so poor that it is believed only when it speaks ill of itself.

* * *

YOU boast that you have good blood in your veins, — so might a mosquito boast.

* * *

WE WRITE learned works on social problems, on the struggle between capital and labor, on the negro question, on poverty in great cities, and the like, but the full and only solution is in the Sermon on the Mount.

* * *

INDISCRIMINATE charity may be unwise, but Saint Benedict left this rule: "First, relieve the poor; then, if need be, question them." Better to feed five hundred rascals than once to miss Christ in disguise.

Do NOT be proud; because if all fools wore white hoods, any crowd of men would look like a buckwheat-field in blossom.

* * *

THERE is no argument so hard to answer as a deep sneer — it is stronger than ridicule because it frightens us by its savagery.

* * *

ALL the aristocratic families of Europe trace back their descent to some successful mediæval prize-fighter; many of ours to colonial Tories or transported convicts. It is a poor wine that age will not make good.

* * *

WORDSWORTH'S words,

> "Never to blend our pleasure, or our pride,
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels,"

make one of the best mottoes in English literature, because the doctrine leads up to that word of Christ wherein is the whole law.

* * *

THE little, half-heard overtones of kindness in a good man's life are what make the whole tone sweet and deep under the stroke of God's hand.

* * *

A PERJURER lies in words, a vulgarian lies in deeds.

A CRICKET under a blade of grass commonly makes more noise than a yoke of oxen; and if the noisy cricket is human, it deceives us so much that at times we think it really worth more than an ox.

* * *

IF YOU steal a spoon from your host the world calls you a thief; but if you add treachery to thieving and steal his reputation with a jest, the world calls you a wit.

PATIENCE AND SORROW

PATIENCE AND SORROW

SORROW like rain makes roses and mud.

* * *

WHEN we plead for death we really desire a fuller life.

* * *

POSSESS your soul in peace. A wind-ruffled pool reflects no star, and a passion-ruffled soul reflects not the image of God.

* * *

THE noblest souls are sad, the ignoblest are melancholy; and cattle and some men are never sad.

* * *

OUR hearts must be balanced on an agate-edge for the weight of a mustard-seed tips them from laughter to tears.

* * *

A COAL fire softens pig-iron, and sorrow softens a man's heart — at least so say puddlers and sentimentalists; but both these things usually cool to the original hardness.

JACOB did not have the vision of the ladder and the angels until he had laid his head upon a pillow of stone.

* * *

THAT the world is so bare and hollow, is the reason that our laughter has ever a lack of satisfying resonance in it.

* * *

THERE are void places in the night sky, but if we gaze patiently the stars will float out and fill them; and if we gaze patiently at our sorrow, God Himself will come into it with His beauty.

* * *

SORROW may be a good thing for a woman's heart, but it is a very poor cosmetic for her face.

* * *

DEATH is an antidote for this life, and it makes another more stable form of life which is also insoluble in everything.

* * *

WE ARE outside the garden of God's will when we begin to find the thorn Disappointment.

* * *

WHEN our crosses come, instead of carrying them away reasonably we make others and pile these above the heavy load already placed upon us. We are like the famous maiden Jocrisse that drowned herself to escape the rain.

THE patient heart is a willow, the impatient heart a dry reed; when the storm of sorrow comes the reed breaks but the willow yields and recovers.

* * *

ALL good in this life is gold mixed with quartz, — we shall find the pure metal only after the ore has been crushed in the mill of death.

* * *

THE heart is a lake which in spring is covered with drifting petals, shadows of swallows, and bits of azure sky; in winter with ice.

* * *

IT IS in our autumn when

> "The meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Flowers are very common in the spring of youth; they are not valued till we find them rare among fallen leaves.

* * *

WE SEE a robin withdraw herself from her little ones to provoke them to fly after her. God does the same thing with us, and then we foolishly call our state Desolation.

* * *

IF WE leave our graves quiet under God's sun and rain, He clothes them with grass and flowers; and if we leave our sorrows quietly under the light and storm of His will, He makes His grace blossom thereon in beauty.

We are like bricks, made of clay; and we are not fit for use in the City of God until we have been shaped in the mould of His will, and have been burned in the fires of affliction.

* * *

The planets reflecting at night a departed sun are like recollections of joy in sorrow.

* * *

It is very easy to be a Stoic when the sun shines, and to despise the world when your purse is empty.

* * *

There is no sound reason for despondency: at the end of the *Miserere* comes the *Gloria;* at the edge of the crossed desert are the green grass and the music of running waters; April follows winter, the passion ended in the resurrection; after earth comes God.

* * *

Around the Great Salt Lake is a beach one hundred feet above the present strand, and flowers blossom where once was an overwhelming sea of bitter waters. If we wait patiently, our bitter waters will subside and the flowers of peace will blossom.

* * *

Each glad chord struck from our hearts by the hand of Time has all its harmonics in a sad minor key.

We say this life is empty; yet within one half-hour we might see the beauty of a taper-flame in a dimly lit church, and the grace of a moving railway engine's gray plume, and the marvel of bare black boughs in the rain, and hear the music of a glad boy's whistle.

* * *

Like an old woman that goes from room to room searching for her spectacles that are pushed up on her forehead, we walk all over the world looking for the peace which God has so set that our feet are constantly stumbling against it.

* * *

During the sunshine a salty breeze blows from the sea toward the land; during the darkness a breeze laden with flower-perfume blows from the land out to sea, and during sorrow we send out our most fragrant prayers toward eternity.

* * *

Sensuality, spiritual sloth, pride, lack of faith, hope, and charity, are some of the causes of melancholy. Dante, therefore, thrusts the melancholy into the slime of the dead canal of Styx, and there they cry out:

> "We sullen were,
> In the sweet air, which by the sun is gladdened,
> Bearing within ourselves the sluggish reek;
> Now we are sullen in this sable mire."

WHAT is there in sorrow, on earth at least, that makes it better than joy? We are pleased with comedy, we delight in tragedy. All great poetry is sorrowful; all great poets are sorrowful — Shakspere, Dante, Firdousi, Æschylus, Camoens, are normally sorrowful. If we knew Homer we would find the law true for him also. All great music, painting, sculpture, are sorrowful. Christ and His mother were steeped in sorrow. We were redeemed with sorrow, and if joy were better than sorrow we should have been redeemed with joy. We, however, delight only in imitated sorrow, because we are naturally satisfied with sham, as we naturally prefer the world to God. Love for real sorrow is supernatural; it is one of the great graces of the redemption. Only in eternity is joy better than sorrow. We have no right to eternal joy unless we pay for it, and grief is the price of joy. God, Who owes us nothing, wills this.

GOD AND RELIGION

GOD AND RELIGION

AN EVIL thought in a soul is like a water-rat swimming in a pond at evening: the rat destroys the iridescent reflection of heaven in the water.

* * *

THE service of God resembles the window of a cathedral,—dull, bleak, ugly, without; but if we go within we find a blaze of beauty.

* * *

THANK God for His Immensity, because He cannot get away from us if He would.

* * *

I THINK that only very passionate persons become great saints.

* * *

WE SHOULD die like the stars—into day, not into night.

* * *

A CHRISTIAN seeking revenge is exactly like a man that bites a cur because the cur had bitten him.

If you hold a visiting-card before your eye, it will shut out as much as would the Rocky Mountains; and if you keep a little prejudice near your heart, it may shut out the sight of God.

* * *

The Church is a Valkyr that bears on her saddle-bow into Valhalla those heroes that fall in battle.

* * *

We are like flies in a church window-pane, striving to reach freedom on the wrong side of the glass.

* * *

When God would change a man into a priest, He is obliged to take a paper bag and put the crown jewels into it. What wonder that this bag sometimes loses a gem.

* * *

Philosophers rack their brains for metaphysical arguments to prove the existence of God while there are pansies to prove it in every garden.

* * *

The saint's soul is like plate glass: it lets God's will pass through with slight deflection; our souls are mirrors that let in God's will but cast it back.

* * *

If we practically believed in the presence of our Guardian Angels there would be more ladies and gentlemen in the world.

If we valued eternity rightly we would gather up the crumbs of time as carefully as the priest gathers up with his paten the particles on the corporal during the communion.

* * *

A drop of wine clinging to the inner side of a chalice will slip into the wine below at the touch of the priest's hand. Thus should our hearts slip into God's heart at the touch of grace.

* * *

"There," said the young man on the bicycle to his girl companion, as they rode across a railway on Sunday morning, "there is the locomotive that has killed four men."

"Bah"! said the bicycle, "I'm killing entire churches and no one notices the fact."

* * *

If conscience lacks courage it is a legless paralytic.

* * *

When the ancients wished to quiet a wriggling conscience they spoke to it of fate; we talk of nature in like case.

* * *

When a babe sucks his thumb his mother puts quinine on it to wean him from this evil habit; and God has spread bitterness over the "good" things of the world for a like reason, but we make wry faces and still suck our thumbs.

IMMORTALITY and a good drama are all in action. We shall live by our deeds, not by what we know and are.

* * *

TO THE rational man the coming of death and sorrow is not the worst suspense — it is the expectation of sin with its bitterness and contemptible foolishness.

* * *

A DIFFERENCE between a moralist at his twentieth birthday and one at his fiftieth, when considering the old thesis, "The Chief Good is not in riches, honor, nor learning," is that at twenty the argument is studied but not felt, at fifty it is felt, — there is little need for study then. Experience is a fair professor of ethics.

* * *

THE man that yields to sensuality with the intention of casting off the habit when it grows irksome, is very like the man that hangs himself with a halter in a dark cellar in the trust that someone will cut him down in time to save life.

* * *

WHEN we look at one of our sins we see only the froth and splash of the black stone that dropped into the pool of our soul — we do not notice the widening ripple that advances until it ends with the shore, disturbing every space, and distorting the image of the stars.

That old Mohammedan "saint," Ibnu'-s-Semmak, said a word that might be graven on the walls of any Christian church: "Fear God as though you had never obeyed Him, and hope in him as though you had never sinned against Him."

* * *

It is strange that one of the chief uses of that mortal faculty, the Imagination, is to make easier for us a belief in Immortality.

* * *

In Lacedæmon they threw misshapen babes into the cavern Apothetai; we should find an Apothetai for our misshapen thoughts, and preserve only those that are fair.

* * *

Christian marriage is an *égoisme à deux personnes.*

* * *

Religion and poetry lie in the human heart like the corn discovered in the tomb of Pharaoh, and when the proper sunshine comes they grow like that grain.

* * *

Good habits are the soul's muscles — the more you use them the stronger they grow.

* * *

We are buried in the earth like seeds, and at the resurrection some will break through the soil as blossoms and many as weeds.

When you are swimming shoreward through the waves of death you will find it better to have plunged into the waters without any load of sin.

* * *

Pascal said: "Our religion is so divine that another divine religion is only the foundation of it."

* * *

The saint is one that without suffering from lacerated heart-strings can give up every love, from his cigar to his child.

* * *

A grave error at present is a tendency toward fatalism. Persons sin nowadays and say they cannot help their fall. They prate about heredity. They talk of their freedom in one breath and of their slavery to fate in another. Seneca said long ago: "*Nemo fit fato nocens.*"

* * *

On Chiabrera's grave in Savona are the words: "Friend, while living I sought consolation on Mount Parnassus; do you, better advised, seek it on Mount Calvary."

* * *

Children and the poor have waking dreams of the "Good Fairy of Wishes," who fulfils their manifold longings. Grown children, too, and the rich have this fond dream; yet there is really a Good Fairy of Wishes,— God.

If you cannot with filled eyes thank God for the wonderfulness of a pansy, you are not an artist.

* * *

A man's appetence for the good is deeper than the drinking-horn of Thor, for God is the only wine that can brim it.

* * *

One of the chief miracles of the hidden life was the keeping of Saint Joseph for so many years from dying of love.

* * *

The full moon on a still night is God's most ancient figure of the elevation of the Host.

* * *

Historians tell us that the Beautiful Gate of the Temple was destroyed, but we know that it was flung open forever by the head of Longinus' lance.

* * *

A man that turns to God in his old age reminds one of a babe that eats a peach and with profuse generosity offers its mother the stone.

* * *

Saint Benedict threw down an idol in a shrine of the Terra di Lavoro and set up an image of Christ. If the Saint came into our heart he would find a Pantheon to be overturned; yet, we resent the charge of idolatry, and subscribe money to convert the heathen in Asia.

A CRUCIFIX is an image of Christ's body. This is a wide thought, bounded by the Trinity on one side and by hell on the other.

* * *

LIKE a nightingale's, God's music is sweetest in the dark.

* * *

SANCTITY does not consist in a bilious visage. I have known very holy monks that took a long rope in the waist, and who laughed sturdily and often.

* * *

THERE is a fear of God that drives out sin, and a fear of God that causes scrupulosity and sadness. The first is a form of love, the second is a nervous disease or a temptation, or a sin.

* * *

THEOLOGIANS say that in heaven we shall know our own. Yes, if we choose to think of them. God is enough, and every one will be our own in Heaven.

* * *

WE ARE Danaids striving in foolish bitterness to fill our sieves with water when we could easily fill them with God;—a sieve dipped under the sea is full enough.

* * *

NO MAN ever became bankrupt by the loss of time spent upon his knees.

Archimedes said if he had a fulcrum whereon to set his lever he could move the earth. We have that lever,—prayer. We have the fulcrum, also,—Christ's promise; and we can move not only the world, but God himself.

* * *

Why are persons who doubt that St. Peter was at Rome certain that Simon Magus was there? And why do those who scoff at relics of saints keep General Jackson's smallclothes in precious cases?

* * *

The devil grins when he persuades us that it is *always* "in bad form" to speak roughly.

* * *

God's image is in every man, high or low,—a road puddle holds the moon as well as the sea.

* * *

Success and virtue are not always twins.

* * *

A colony of tiny red ants started to burrow at the foot of Mount Shasta. "Is this wise?" asked one of them; "we may cause the mountain, which, after all, is beautiful, to tumble down." The others answered solemnly: "Let it fall!" This historical fact is kindly offered for the consideration of the Church's enemies.

God is a good physician who is pitiful when we are delirious.

* * *

A chief rule in the arithmetic of merit is that God's and his neighbor's opinion of a man is always in inverse ratio to his own opinion of himself.

* * *

God and a mother are bankers that pay out usurious interest.

* * *

In charitate perpetua dilexi te — we are eternal, and that in the very love of God; yet we can turn away to the love of — food.

* * *

Our system of book-keeping as regards the account with God seems to be irregular. The Father gave us His only begotten Son. This Son gave us the last drop of His blood; and we give them in return a sleepy half-hour on Sunday morning, and think the ledger is balanced.

* * *

We sow nettles and we blame God because we cannot reap wheat.

* * *

The Church and heresy — Saturn and a billiard-ball; and the billiard-ball threatens to crack Saturn in the collision.

Anger and gluttony are two very common sins that are seldom reproved. Old persons, especially, are frequently gluttonous, from the erroneous opinion that age requires more food than youth.

* * *

There is nothing ugly in the world except sin; even an ulcer is hideous only to the ignorant — the pathologist and the bacteriologist find it wonderful. Roses grow on ragweeds if you look aright for them.

* * *

The words Fortune, Chance, and Luck are inventions of the Father of Lies to discredit God's providence.

* * *

A humiliating proof of man's ignorance is that he is more deeply impressed by a miraculous clearing up of an eyeball or by the restitution of a bit of bone than by the conversion of a sinner.

* * *

It is as easy to make a new planet as to revivify a dead soul, yet souls are revivified every day. Therefore there is a God.

* * *

Virtue is a passion under a curb bit; it thus carries us safely into the City of God. Vice is the same passion with the bit in its teeth; it thus carries us into the ditch.

Our Lord delights in the conjunction of extremes. He made us of slime and spirit. He united his Godhead with human nature; He is willing to unite even man with Himself.

* * *

Blessed are the holy nails of the cross which so wounded His feet that He cannot walk away from you and me!

* * *

The veil of the Temple was rent that the Holy of Holies might never again be hidden, but we insist on rehanging the veil of the flesh before the Holy of Holies which is the image of God in our souls, and some of us make very poor imitation of the high priest — we enter behind this veil only once a year. about Easter.

* * *

God's beauty is a string of pearls in the lake of the soul, and the lake must be limpid, that we may find the gems. Let the mud settle and do not stir it up again.

* * *

The world says, If you make chaff of yourself the cows will eat you; the saints say, Let them eat!

* * *

One of the wisest remarks Emerson ever made was: "'Tis curious that we only believe as deeply as we live."

Inaccuracy in the use of words is a source of evil. For example, martyrs are made by the cause, not by the suffering, as men usually suppose; riches are spiritual things, not metals and acres of dirt.

* * *

We do not fear the corpse of a tiger, but many fear the corpse of a man with a mysterious dread. Why? Because of the soul that has been therein, and which is known to be in existence after the coming of death.

* * *

The American clergyman once labored in God's vineyard exclusively, now he too often works outside the wall. The American physician, however, owing to our remarkable medical laws, continues to labor in God's churchyard.

* * *

Some persons pray only when they foresee trouble coming. They are tree-toads that croak before a storm.

* * *

There is no small thing in the world. A few pus-cocci, of which a thousand could pass through the eye of a needle, got into Washington's throat and killed him in a week; an apple was eaten by a woman and hell was thronged; nay, God Himself had to come down to turn the river of souls out of that pit.

FOUR thousand eight hundred ordinary bacteria could lie side by side on the head of a pin, and one of these bacteria may be a great oak-tree for some parasite upon which God turns His infinite intellect.

* * *

I THINK we shall find that heaven resembles a church in this particular: there will be more women there than men. Hell will, also, like a dramshop, have more men than women.

* * *

CONSCIENCE is a collector that presents the bills to passion.

* * *

A SAINT is not understood in his own day. He is like a hill touched with dawn while the valley is in darkness.

* * *

ALL sin is selfishness; all virtue is self-restraint.

* * *

THE patience of God is like the Atlantic — it bears up a garbage-barge as well as a rotten apple; and as Chaucer said: "If He ne hadde pite of mannes soul, sory songe mighte we alle singe."

* * *

PREACHERS that wonder at the failure of their work should remember that children will eat bread spread with sweets.

A SAINT is like a young bird that sings at midnight. The other birds cry: "Hush, thou fool, the neighbors will be awakened"! But God, sleepless in His heaven, says: "That was a sweet melody"!

* * *

A MAN that leaves virtue and then seeks peace is very like a stray chicken in the rain. The coop is open before his eyes, but he blunders, piping sadly, all over the barnyard, and two angels could not drive him in the right direction.

* * *

THE most abject pauper I ever knew was a millionaire whose soul was starved to death.

* * *

OUR will-tendencies or appetites are like water —they are ever ready to run into a cup. If the cup contains them they are at rest, if it is too small they spill over and remain in agitation. God is the only cup large enough to hold them.

* * *

THE ease or difficulty with which we are scandalized is a test of our faith in the moral order, and of our common sense in the natural order.

* * *

SANCTITY is a ruby at the bottom of the Dead Sea, and we must dive into the bitter waters if we would grasp it.

It has become common of late to say that the management of the Church has passed from the hands of the monks into the hands of the secular clergy, but some old-fashioned persons think that the management is still in the hands of God.

* * *

You call that man a fool who ties up a ship with a pack-thread, and you say this while you are in the act of tying up your own soul with a hope for riches.

* * *

The ticking of a watch is a little thing but it beats out the lives of men.

* * *

Epictetus said: "It is better by assenting to truth to conquer opinion, than by assenting to opinion to be conquered by truth," but no man heeds him, except the saint, although we all are convinced that truth is the most merciless conqueror the world knows.

* * *

We must take the church as she is, with dust on the hem of her robe, since you and I are part of that dust. He that looks for absolute perfection in this world is very young or a fool. If you want absolute perfection, separate the Church from her members and amuse yourself with that thin delight.

An heresiarch attacking the Church is like a flea that says: "Watch me smash this fellow"! and then jumps upon a man's back. The man does not know he is touched till he feels the thing crawling on his neck, then he half unconsciously brushes it off.

* * *

On the first Good Friday the earth was a funeral car rolling through space.

* * *

Vicious dogs, deep water, bitter hatred, and real sanctity are all still.

* * *

If you look at a rain-filled hoof-print in a road you can see the soil below and also a reflection of the sky; and in every man's heart you can see the image of God and the earthliness below that.

* * *

If you would have your memory last forever, build your monument in God's heart.

* * *

There is a spiritual color-blindness as there is a physical color-blindness. The rich, ruby-like tints of holiness are on that account a dirty brown to many persons.

* * *

Our souls are waves, and God's providence is the wind.

THE modern infidel looks upon the next life as the old French lady looked upon ghosts — she did not believe in them but she was afraid of them nevertheless.

* * *

THE bitter waters of the Great Salt Lake evaporate heavenward and fall in sweet rain, and our thoughts sent up to God are purified and fall into our hearts again in refreshing showers.

* * *

WHEN hearts turn to God there comes first the warm April rain of consolation, next the summer of aridity when the grain is ripening, then the autumnal upgathering of the full sheaves.

* * *

THE Church and the soul are athletes that grow stronger in times of resistance to opposing force and weaker in times of peace.

* * *

DO NOT mistake your dyspepsia for sanctity.

* * *

"UT FUSO taurorum sanguine centum
Sic capitur minimo thuris honore Deus,"

said Ovid; and God is the greatest spendthrift — He buys one diseased human soul with all his blood, and a little scrap of human love with Himself.

Judas sold our Lord for eighteen dollars and thirty-six cents; we sell Him to escape the giggling of a woman and then abuse Judas.

* * *

It is said that the just man falls seven times a day. If we accept this small average literally he falls 127,750 times in fifty years. Fancy the mass of sin the habitual law-breaker can heap up in a lifetime!

* * *

Do good in the dark like the flower that blooms at night,—God can see.

* * *

We are mere notes in a piece of music played by the angel Death—heard and lost; and if we do not sound discordantly all's well.

* * *

The chief characteristic of the angel Death is his contempt for flattery: he takes the man that the whole world worships and says: "This fellow is really but a pinch of greasy slime and I'll prove it." And he does. He tosses him by the heels into a box for a few days and then says to us: "Now hold your noses and look at Sir Fine-Feathers"!

* * *

It is easier to raise a stout oak in a hothouse than a stout-souled man in a house of wealth.

THE saint is the man that bears his own crosses as easily as you and I bear the crosses of our neighbors

* * *

CHRIST as priest and victim should have been without blemish, therefore He was even physically beautiful.

* * *

"ES IST gut, in der *Stille* auf das Heil Gottes warten" (Jeremiah, Lament. iii., 26), is an example of depth of meaning in a sound,—other translations are weaker.

* * *

CREATION is a complex system of orbits. If everything is kept within its orbit there is peace. Man and a railway engine are useless when off the track.

* * *

PAGAN priests performed ceremonies with awed accuracy; Christian priests usually perform them inaccurately. The ceremony was the substance with the pagan, hence the special care; the ceremony is not the substance with the Christian, hence the inattention. When words or actions become the substance in Christian worship the priest is accurate. God struck Oza with sudden death for carelessly touching the ark, but this was before the law of love went into effect,—men today presume upon that law.

MICHEL ANGELO said: "He that wants more than leaves had better not go to May," but we all go to May for fruit, and then grow impatient at our failures.

* * *

GOETHE and George Eliot both have this thought: "Tell me what you laugh at and I shall tell you what you are."

* * *

ONLY men of the strongest faith should become scientists, because scientists so readily fall into the evil and vulgar habit of Didymus — they must *touch* everything.

* * *

SCIENCE is Truth with her wings clipped.

* * *

A MAN will say: "If I had faith I would abandon the world." Abandon the world and you will get faith. You cannot swim unless you go into the water.

* * *

WHEN our Lord gave the proofs of His divinity to the disciples of the Baptist, these were: "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead arise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them." (Matt. xi., 5.) There is a growth toward a climax in this enumeration, and the most wonderful fact is the last, — "the poor have the Gospel preached to them."

Since a good divine is a good physician of souls, it seems strange that divines do not take up specialties, as the physicians of the body adopt these. We might have spiritual oculists that would cure the concupiscence of the eyes, spiritual laryngologists that would cure the vocal cords of the disease of gossiping, and so on.

* * *

The modern infidel that sneers at the miracles of the Bible sees nothing absurd in the ghosts in 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Richard III.,' and 'Julius Cæsar,' and his heart leaps when Athene shouts beside Achilles in the trench. He delights in fictitious miracles because his mental tendency is toward sham, just as his infidelity is sham; and because the heart must seek the supernatural in sham if it rejects it in reality.

* * *

In the 'French Revolution' Carlyle has these words: "Freedom is the one purport wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all man's struggles, toilings, and sufferings on this earth." There are three kinds of freedom: freedom of the will in the metaphysician's sense of the term; external or juridical and political freedom; and freedom from the tyranny of passion. If we are free in the third meaning of the term, we are in possession of peace.

In the natural order a single trace of vulgarity in a man's character is infallible proof that we cannot evoke deeply refined thought from him, but this is not true in the supernatural order. God puts precious wine in very cheap vessels, and you can at times get no slight spiritual truth from the words of a man so thick-witted that he is capable of setting up artificial flowers on an altar of God.

* * *

An instructive treatise might be written on pathological religion. There is a fever which causes some Christians to fight the "escaped priest" but prevents them from going to confession; there is a destructive mania which permits faithful attendance upon all church services but induces a chronic state of character-ripping; there is an epidemic megalomania which makes ignorant persons positively certain they could write better sermons than those which the priest gives them; there is an occasional megalomania which causes some priests to think they are the Church; there is the "night terror of children" which is afraid of the devil who is very harmless when you know him; there is a state of neurasthenia which makes women and some editors jump up on a table whenever the enemies of the Church whisk their little tails across the floor; and a hundred other ills that *flesh* is heir to.

Our Lord was with the Blessed Virgin at Bethlehem, in Egypt, in Nazareth, in Jerusalem, on Calvary; He is with her in Heaven, and when any nation drives her out He follows her. The Church has recognized this association in the year's festivals. We have the feast of the Annunciation or Incarnation and the feast of the Immaculate Conception; the two Presentations in the Temple; the Baptism of our Lord and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin; the Passion and the Dolors; the Ascension and the Assumption; the Sacred Hearts, and so on.

* * *

We sometimes see pictures of the Crucifixion in which the Blessed Virgin is represented as in a swoon. Benedict XIV., in his book 'De Festis' (lib. ii., cap. iv.), has an article on this subject in which he sets down as a proposition: "We hold that neither under the cross, nor anywhere else, did the Blessed Virgin fall fainting." In the course of his argument he gathers together the opinions of the great theologians upon the question. Ambrose, Peter Canisius, Suarez, Cajetan, Reynandus, Cornelius à Lapide, Novatus, and others are with him in his assertion.

* * *

The heroes of the old Norse sagas all had this virtue: they could stand up, front to front, before man, dragon, norn, and god, and take a blow

without cringing. They knew that the strong man can cross the bridge Bifrost if he keeps fear in loathing. That spirit is the material for saints, for all sin is weakness. God loves a good fighter, and there is no peace this side of death, except in the imagination of the amiable old ladies who are so busy with the proceedings of their arbitration societies that they do not hear upon the streets below them the tread of soldiers going out to battle.

* * *

THE diameter of the earth's orbit is 190,000,000 miles. Take that as a base-line and strive to triangulate the distance of one of the fixed stars that make small light-specks on the blue arch over your head. You cannot get an angle of any kind. The star is so far away that the sides of this triangle are practically parallel; in other words 190,000,000 miles in this relation is smaller than a period in type,—is a mere mathematical point. The vault up there, with its million systems of suns, is, as a Persian poet said, a bubble on the ocean of His immensity. What are we in that universe? When a bacteriologist is examining a colony of bacteria he marks the glass over the clump so that he can find it again, and the angels would be obliged to do something similar to find a whole nation of us were it not for a first-class miracle, but we can be insolent in our prayers—one of us can.

In about four drops of blood there are five million red blood-cells and two thousand five hundred white blood-cells, besides other things. Under an ordinary oil-immersion lens one can see at times thirty to forty cholera bacilli within one of these white blood-cells. Now, one of these bacilli dropped into a proper medium could, in a few hours, furnish material enough to cause an epidemic of cholera which would make a desert of all Europe if not checked. The mediæval plagues were caused in this manner, if we except the ergot plagues and a few others. God does not require a windlass to lift our mighty selves into a place where we cannot be impudent.

* * *

The sin of despair always reminds me of the sin of Eve,—both are sins of stupidity. Think of Saint Austin who was a Manichean and a libertine, and afterward one of the greatest Doctors of the Church; of Saint Paul, the saint-slayer, who was rapt to the heaven of heavens; of Saint Peter who denied Christ before a kitchen-wench, but who as prince of the Apostles received the grace of crucifixion for the Master; of Saint Mary of Magdala, the street-walker, who had the hair with which she wiped our Savior's feet besprinkled with the precious blood on Golgotha; of Saint David, the lecherous suborner of murder, but who became a man after God's own heart; of Eve who flooded

hell with souls but is now at the feet of the Madonna. There is some reason for the sin of presumption, but the sin of despair is the sin of a fool.

* * *

Sound is a mode of motion; light is probably a more rapid vibration in the same mode. In Heaven, therefore, we may *hear* color and light. It will be pleasant there to close our eyes and listen to the rounded symphony of each sunset and the subtle harmony of twilight — if, indeed, the haunting of God's beauty will let us hear. Every slight movement will shed a fragrance of melody. Often we shall grow faint with the ravishment of music leaping from the flash of our Lady's white hand. Oh, "the ear of the heart is exquisitely fine!" Yet we that are here athirst for music shall be satisfied,— nay, we shall be upheld by His right arm lest we die for the ecstasy of hearing.

* * *

The billion glittering worlds we see on a summer night are micrococci caught in the blood-corpuscle of our sky. This sky is one blood-cell of a giant who, in turn, is a speck of dust on God's sandal. You and I are very diminutive parasites on one of the ultimate micrococci called the earth; yet we patronize God at times! Is not that a hideous jest? We shall never grasp the entire width of this jest, but it should explain in part

the patience of God. God must use the microscope of His infinite intelligence to find us at all, and we think He owes us something. We are sublime through the enormity of our insolence.

* * *

The nearest fixed star, our next-door neighbor among these fixed stars, is Alpha Centauri, which is twenty-five trillion, two hundred and fourteen billion, four hundred million miles distant from your eye. Stand under one of the Yosemite precipices, which run up only three thousand feet, and the height is stupefying; but three thousand feet is a thousandth part of a turn on the finest micrometer screw that an archangel could make, compared with the distance of Alpha Centauri. We do not know what one billion means; it is a mere mysterious sign. There is a star which is in front of our faces nearly every night, and the wisest of us cannot have the faintest conception of what so material a thing as its distance is, yet we pose before God and discuss His justice. This is one of the reasons I have for saying that the difference between ourselves and lunatics is largely one of residence.

* * *

The light from the farthest stars that we see takes *centuries* to reach us, coming always at the rate of 186,330 miles a second. An angel may have pinched one of these between his finger and

thumb and quenched it when Luther was "reforming" the Church, and the light would be pouring down on us yet. Stars which flew off as sparks from God's anvil when Saint Michael was young will toss their light into a telescope for the first time the year before the general judgment, and the astronomer that will discover these stars will go to church the Sunday after the discovery and criticise loftily the sermon of another microbe who will talk without a quaver on the Incarnation of Christ.

* * *

When the end has come and all mankind have been gathered together that chose heaven or hell, God will say to the angels: "Children, close the gates, and put out the little lights." The stars will be extinguished, and then the last rays of the escaping light will spread, spread for the thousandth power of a trillion of miles and farther before they blend with nothingness; and this distance is not the width of a blood-corpuscle compared with God's immensity,—is nothing at all. One of the most wonderful things in God, to the man who cannot appreciate more abstract attributes, is that He can see this tiny universe; and when we know that He turns His entire intellect upon one of us, that He shrank within a human body and had Himself killed for one of us, we must leave that to faith as we leave the mystery of the Trinity. Still we have novelists, female

novelists at that (God save the mark!), that write about His justice disapprovingly.

* * *

Sometimes it almost seems that the initial step toward the embrace of God is to have been a brutal sinner. God is the first mother: He cannot forget his "black sheep" The world says: "Lord, this will not do! We must have regard for decency and justice."

He smiles and kisses the shuddering, diseased soul, and whispers: "It is decent and just to save —I paid all debts with blood."

"But, Master, this encourageth crime"

"Nay," He says, "that needeth no encouragement; it cannot be worse. To cure the plague is not to spread the plague."

"But sin is different from disease," objects the World (who is without sin); "the sinner hath free will."

"Yes, I know this free will," he answers; "and I know of other things,—for example, I know of ignorance and of weakness in high places as well as in low places; but I know most of all that I love. I am God, but I cannot avoid this love because it is Myself."

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